Electric Arc Furnace Industry

771. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question 3180 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 21st August, 1987 and state whether economics of the Electric Arc Furnace industry has since been reviewed with a view to determining a strategy for the growth of the industry, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons for the inordinate delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR): Data is being collected for carrying out a review of the Economics of the Electric Arc Furnace Industry. The review is not yet complete.

Committee/Body to Monitor Drought and Flood Relief Work

772. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have set up any Committee/Body to monitor the drought and flood relief work and also oversee and ensure that funds/grants earmarked for relief work and granted to State Governments are properly utilised;

(b) if not, how can the above objectives be met;

(c) whether Government have atleast taken suitable measures in respect of the cases reported in different newspapers about the misuse of relief funds and materials;

(d) if so, the number of such cases which have been probed and the number of officers/functionaries punished alongwith the nature of punishment awarded in each case;

(e) whether Government propose to introduce concurrent audit to deal with relief expenditure which will eliminate many cover ups at a later date and minimise misuse to a greater extent; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A Cabinet Committee on Drought (CCD) has been set up under the chairmanship of Prime Minister, in order to initiate appropriate and timely measures for providing relief to drought and flood affected areas and to keep a close watch on the implementation of various measures.

(c) and (d) Primary responsibility of execution of the relief measures in the wake of natural calamities is essentially of the State Government concerned. As such Government of India do not collect such information.

(e) and (f) Provision exists for concurrent audit. Government of India would arrange for such audit of relief expenditure, as and when considered necessary.

Assistance to Farmers

773. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to death of live-stock the farmers in drought affected States, particularly in Bihar, are experiencing great hardships in undertaking ploughing operations;

(b) whether Government have taken any step to render assistance to such affected farmers in the country particularly in Bihar; and

(c) if so, what are the details of assistance provided to such farmers; and, if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Small and Marginal farmers in the flood affected areas of Bihar are reported to be experiencing hardships in taking up ploughing operations.